

The Beverly Dwelling

As we have elsewhere noted Philip and his growing family lived for some twenty-five years in the Beverly home purchased by him in 1698. Five of their six children were born in that home and John⁷⁰ the eldest was but three years of age at the time of its purchase. And when the family removed from here, Mary, the youngest of the children, was in her thirteenth year. That this home was a comfortable and pleasant place in which to live may reasonably be surmised by the notation concerning it as given in the deed⁷¹ of purchase by Philip. By these brief notations we learn there was land to the amount of six acres on which were "timber trees," and also "fruit trees," and besides the "dwelling-house" there were "out-housing" and "fencing." That this "dwelling-house" was of substantial construction may be judged by certain observations concerning it,⁷² made by the late Mr. Sidney Perley (antiquarian and local historian elsewhere quoted), who suggests it may have been built by Lt. John Dodge, who as he judged, was owner of this property at the time (1686) it was sold to Thomas Edwards, of Ipswich "yeoman," from whom it was purchased by Philip some twelve years later. In the comments made in connection with his account of Beverly in 1700, Mr. Perley goes on to say that this house was conveyed to Josiah Woodbery (also named a "yeoman") in 1734, and adds "how much longer it stood is unknown to this writer." It would seem by these facts that this was a well-constructed house since it was in use for at least sixty years and quite probably for a much longer time. At the time Philip purchased it for his home it had been built, as it seems for some ten years or more,⁷³ but was scarcely "old" in comparison with the probable fifty or more years of its use thereafter.

By the description in the deed concerning this property we learn that it bordered on "the Townhighway," a road leading into the adjoining town of Wenham. And as indicated by the late Sidney Perley, in his map of this part of Beverly at 1700,⁷⁴ the house probably stood at a point where this road connected with one known as "Dodge Row," presumably because a number of this early Beverly family lived along this line, and probably at the above date.⁷⁵ That there were other family homes as near as those on Dodge Row is indicated by the Perley map; for there are marked on this map a half-dozen or so names of early Beverly⁷⁶ families who at that time had homes in this district; by the map measurements these homes seem within a mile or less of Philip's home. Moreover there are indications that a number of families came to live on this "Townhighway" during the years that Philip and his family lived there. Accordingly it may be judged that during these years this part of Beverly was far from presenting the lonely aspect which characterizes it⁷⁷ at the present time. And we may easily surmise that along the road then called the "Townhighway" (now and for the past hundred or more years known as Grover Street) there was much passing to and fro, not only between Beverly and Wenham, but between the homes of the several families of this district, and between these and the centre of Beverly where, some two miles away, were the shops and the one church attended by all who were residents of the Township of Beverly. That to and from the home of Philip and Martha with its six growing children there was often much passing in friendly converse we may easily believe. Also from the various indications concerning Philip and Martha we may judge that this home for the most part, during the twenty-five years of their dwelling therein, had brought to them and their children the blessing of a happy family companionship.⁷⁸